

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows. All claims currently pending in the application, including those not amended, are reproduced below. A marked-up copy of the amended claims, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

1. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An image forming apparatus

comprising:

check means for checking quality of an image to be formed; and

determination means for performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a check by said check means.

2. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein said check means checks whether to form a high-quality image.

3. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein said determination means performs the determination on the basis of a state of said image forming apparatus which may influence image formation.

4. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said

determination means performs the determination using different criteria for at least one item of remaining toner for forming an image, service life of a photosensitive drum for forming an image, whether a tray for outputting an image formed on a sheet is full, a

Q. predicted density value of an image to be formed, and remaining sheets for forming an image.

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Q. 5. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said determination means determines whether to permit or inhibit image formation.

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Q. 6. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for performing display output based on the determination by said determination means.

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Q. 7. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An image forming apparatus comprising:  
reception means for receiving an image;  
check means for checking an attribute of a received image; and  
determination means for performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a check by said check means.

8. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said check means checks whether the received image is an image to be charged.

9. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein said check means checks whether the received image is an image requiring  
high-quality image formation.

10. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein said determination means performs the determination on the basis of a state of said  
image forming apparatus which may influence image formation.

11. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said  
determination means performs the determination using different criteria for at least one  
item of remaining toner for forming an image, service life of a photosensitive drum for  
forming an image, whether a tray for outputting an image formed on a sheet is full, a  
predicted density value of an image to be formed, and remaining sheets for forming an  
image.

12. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising  
display means for performing display output based on the determination by said  
determination means.

13. (Unchanged From Prior Version) An apparatus according to claim 12,  
wherein said display means causes a device which transmitted the received image to  
perform the display.

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14. (Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:  
check means for checking an attribute of an image to be formed;  
identification means for identifying a state of said image forming apparatus  
which may influence image formation; and  
control means for selectively performing, in accordance with a check by  
said check means and identification by said identification means, an operation of  
performing a warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an  
operation of accepting an image formation request without performing a warning about the  
image formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request.

15. (Amended) A method of controlling an image forming apparatus,  
comprising:  
a check step of checking quality of an image to be formed; and  
a determination step of performing permission determination of image  
formation using different criteria in accordance with a check in said check step.

16. (Amended) A method of controlling an image forming apparatus,  
comprising:  
a reception step of receiving an image;  
a check step of checking an attribute of a received image; and  
a determination step of performing permission determination of image  
formation using different criteria in accordance with a check in said check step.

Sub B1)  
17. (Amended) A method of controlling an image forming apparatus,  
comprising:  
a check step of checking an attribute of an image to be formed;  
an identification step of identifying a state of the image forming apparatus  
which may influence image formation; and  
a control step of selectively performing, in accordance with a check in said  
check step and an identification in said identification step, an operation of performing a  
warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an operation of  
accepting an image formation request without performing a warning about the image  
formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request.

18. (Amended) A storage medium which stores a program for controlling  
an image forming apparatus, the program comprising program code for executing:  
a check step of checking quality of an image to be formed; and  
a determination step of performing permission determination of image  
formation using different criteria in accordance with a check in said check step.

19. (Amended) A storage medium which stores a program for controlling  
an image forming apparatus, the program comprising program code for executing:  
a reception step of receiving an image;  
a check step of checking an attribute of a received image; and

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a determination step of performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a check in said check step.

20. (Amended) A storage medium which stores a program for controlling an image forming apparatus, the program comprising program code for executing:

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a check step of checking an attribute of an image to be formed;

an identification step of identifying a state of the image forming apparatus which may influence image formation; and

a control step of selectively performing, in accordance with a check in said check step and an identification in said identification step, an operation of performing a warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an operation of accepting an image formation request without performing a warning about the image formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request.

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#### REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in the light of the Office Action dated July 2, 2002 (Paper No. 3). Claims 1 to 20 are currently in the application, of which Claims 1, 7 and 14 to 20 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,933,498 (Schneck). Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments together with the applied reference and respectfully traverses the rejection.

The present invention concerns an image forming apparatus in which the quality of an image to be formed is checked. In accordance with the checked image quality, different criteria are used to perform permission determination of image formation. By using different criteria according to the image quality, image formation of an image requiring high quality is stopped when high quality is not likely to be achieved, while image formation of an image requiring lower quality is permitted when the lower quality can be achieved. In this manner, occurrences of sub-standard image formation are reduced.

With reference to particular claim language, independent Claims 1, 15 and 18 concern an image forming apparatus in which a quality of an image to be formed is checked. A permission determination of image formation is then performed using different criteria in accordance with the checked image quality.

The applied reference is not understood to disclose the foregoing features of the invention. In particular, the applied reference is not understood to disclose at least the feature of performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a checked image quality of an image to be formed.

Schneck concerns a system for controlling access and use of data according to a set of rules. According to Schneck, when a user attempts to access a portion of data, an access mechanism determines if the data is protected and what level of access is available to the user based on the set of rules. However, Schneck is not understood to disclose determining access for a user by applying different criteria in accordance with image quality of an image the user wants to access. Rather, Shneck is understood to

merely disclose determining access to data using a single set of rules regardless of the quality of the data to be accessed.

While Schneck does mention varying qualities such as resolution, accuracy and fidelity, these qualities are understood to represent varying levels of access a user might be granted to particular data and not checked qualities of the data in accordance with which different criteria are used to determine access to the data. Therefore, Schneck is not understood to disclose at least the feature of performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a checked image quality of an image to be formed.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 15 and 18 are believed to be allowable over the applied reference. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(a) rejection of Claims 1, 15 and 18 are respectfully requested.

Independent Claims 7, 16 and 19 concern an image forming apparatus in which an image is received and an attribute of the received image is checked. A permission determination of image formation is then performed using different criteria in accordance with the checked attribute.

The applied reference is not understood to disclose the foregoing features of the invention. In particular, the applied reference is not understood to disclose at least the feature of performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a checked attribute of a received image.

As discussed above with respect to independent Claims 1, 15 and 18, Schneck is not understood to disclose the feature of performing permission determination



of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a checked image quality. Therefore, Schneck is also not understood to disclose at least the feature of performing permission determination of image formation using different criteria in accordance with a checked attribute of a received image.

Accordingly, independent Claims 7, 16 and 19 are believed to be allowable over the applied reference. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(a) rejection of Claims 7, 16 and 19 are respectfully requested.

Independent Claims 14, 17 and 20 concern an image forming apparatus in which an attribute of an image to be formed is checked and a state of the image forming apparatus which may influence image formation is identified. An operation of performing a warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an operation of accepting an image formation request without performing a warning about the image formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request are selectively performed in accordance with the checked attribute and the identified state.

The applied reference is not understood to disclose the foregoing features of the invention. In particular, the applied reference is not understood to disclose at least the features of identifying a state of an image forming apparatus which may influence image formation and selectively performing an operation of performing a warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an operation of accepting an image forming request without performing a warning about the image formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request in accordance with a checked attribute of an image to be formed and the identified state of the image forming apparatus.

As mentioned above, Schneck determines a user's access to data based on a set of rules. While the rules described in Schneck may prevent a user from accessing and printing image data for which the user does not have access, Schneck is not understood to disclose at least the feature of identifying a state of an image forming apparatus which may influence image formation and selectively performing an operation of performing a warning about image formation and accepting an image formation request, an operation of accepting an image forming request without performing a warning about the image formation, and an operation of not accepting an image formation request in accordance with a checked attribute of an image to be formed and the identified state of the image forming apparatus.

Accordingly, independent Claims 14, 17 and 20 are believed to be allowable over the applied reference. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(a) rejection of Claims 14, 17 and 20 are respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,  
California, office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed  
to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Attorney for Applicant

Registration No. 50,957

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10112-2200  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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